



**COWLEY**  
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

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# Top careers to consider

## Accountancy, Audit and Financial Management



A career in professional services means that you will use your expertise to advise clients, helping their businesses to succeed. The most common services are Audit, Tax, Financial Advisory, Risk Advisory and Consulting. Professional services firms pay their employees to sit professional qualifications, and have offices all over the country.

### What they're looking for:

Many professional services firms offer School Leaver Programmes, apprenticeships and graduate schemes. These are suitable for people with strong problem-solving and communication skills, and they will take graduates from all disciplines with a variety of experience.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £28,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £45,000-£70,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £100,000-£500,000+

## Actuarial Industry



Actuaries are experts in risk management. They use statistical information to assess the probability of financial risks to businesses and insurance companies. Becoming an actuary gives you a wide range of business areas to work in, as risks affect many different sectors. It also requires you to use your mathematical ability in a practical sense, applying probability to real-world situations.

### What they're looking for:

Actuaries need to have a good understanding of maths and be effective problem-solvers. They also need to be willing to work hard for their qualifications, which can take between 3-6 years to gain either post-graduation or via a school leaver route. Finally, actuaries need strong communication skills in order to be able to communicate complex actuarial ideas to clients and non-experts.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £25,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £64,000-£88,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £100,000-£500,000+

## Architecture



Architects design new buildings, make alterations to existing structures, and advise on the restoration and preservation of old properties. Work ranges from individual buildings to large redevelopment schemes, and responsibility can extend to the design of the surrounding landscape and spaces. Working closely with clients and residents, architects make sure that projected designs match the outlined requirements and are fit for purpose. Architects usually control a project from start to finish and work with a number of other professionals, including surveyors and engineers.

### What they're looking for:

Good design/drawing skills and a passion for architecture and the built environment. Strong analytical skills, accuracy, and attention-to-detail are also important, as well as excellent IT, communication and teamwork skills to liaise effectively with a range of other professionals.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £30,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £40,000-£70,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £90,000-£500,000+

## Charity and Social Impact



There are about 170,000 charities in England and Wales that exist to make a positive social impact, across a range of different issues both in the UK and worldwide.<sup>1</sup> A good starting point is thinking about which cause you care about the most and what kind of role you'd prefer, as well as the size of the organisation. Working in a small charity often means you take on a varied role, with opportunities to shape the organisation and work directly with beneficiaries (the people or community you may be supporting). Larger charities can allow you

to specialise and often offer clearer paths for progression. Some charities also offer graduate schemes, which can give you a good insight into a variety of different roles within the charity, such as fundraising, policy, governance, external affairs, human resources, finance, partnerships, technology and more.

### What they're looking for:

People who are passionate about making a difference and who have a strong track record of volunteering and/or projects that are focused on making positive change. Charities also look for people with relevant skills and experience, beyond academic qualifications. A degree is desirable, and jobs in international development may require a Masters.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £20,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £50,000-£80,000+

## Civil Service



There were an estimated 5.95 million employees in the public sector in March 2024.<sup>2</sup> The public sector draws together all the areas of the economy that are owned and operated by the government, such as ministerial departments, agencies, and public bodies. A public service job would therefore span a range of roles from working for central and local government, to careers in teaching, health and social care, and law enforcement.

However, civil servants also work in a huge range of local, national, and international bodies, working on exciting projects such as creating policy for UK space programmes, delivering humanitarian relief, and improving public services across the country.

Civil servants are politically neutral and responsible for delivering public services and supporting the government in developing and implementing its policies. Many people become civil servants because they are passionate about making a difference, and want to help create innovative solutions to complex, real-life problems.

One way to access careers in the Civil Service is the Fast Stream—a two to four-year graduate programme, offering an accelerated career path into leadership positions across government. Most schemes accept degrees from any discipline, while some require more technical knowledge. Fast Streamers can join through one of 15 different streams:

Commercial	Government Economics Service	Human Resources
Digital, Data, Technology and Cyber	Government Operational Research Service	Operational Delivery
Diplomatic and Development	Government Policy	Project Delivery
Diplomatic and Development Economics	Government Social Research	Property
Finance	Government Statistical Service	Science and Engineering <sup>3</sup>

### What they're looking for:

You don't need to study politics or a related subject at university to work in the public sector; students from all degree subjects are generally welcomed. The Civil Service Fast Stream accepts graduates with at least a 2:2 from any degree subject for most of their streams but some are restricted to certain degree subjects and/or at least 2:1.

The Civil Service also offers a range of direct entry roles, apprenticeships, and internships. Beyond the Civil Service, there are hundreds of internship and graduate opportunities at various public sector organisations, ranging from policy-making to direct public service delivery across the sector.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £23,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £35,000-£60,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £80,000-£100,000+

## Construction and Building Services



The construction industry is responsible for all new building and refurbishment, and covers a broad range of roles for both school leavers and university graduates. While many of the roles available in the sector require a specialist knowledge, there are options for young people with all kinds of interests, including project management, design and technical roles. Construction and building services offer roles across the UK, as well as many international opportunities, meaning you may be required to travel frequently in your career. Construction would suit anyone who is practically minded and enjoys seeing the finished product of their work.

### What they're looking for:

For graduates, requirements are dependent on the role you are applying for, but generally maths-based degrees are preferred, as well as all forms of engineering. Construction is all about using logic to come up with workable solutions, so any degree with problem-solving is also desired.

There are many options for school leavers going into construction—many larger firms now offer excellent apprenticeships for technical roles, and there are also more common routes into the sector through schemes such as plumbing and electrician apprenticeships.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £17,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £60,000-£80,000+



## Consulting



Management consultants work on projects for organisations (their “clients”) who require expert advice on how to become more effective in a specific area. The client organisations can be from any sector—consultants could be advising a drinks company on whether to launch a new product; recommending to a hospital how they could decrease patient waiting times; or assessing whether it is more cost-effective for a business to move its headquarters to a different country.

They work with these organisations to formulate new strategies, and/or plans for implementing these changes, so the work is highly variable and often under time pressure, requiring strong analytical and communication skills.

### What they're looking for:

You don't need to have studied a numerical or analytical based subject at university to work as a consultant; students from all degree backgrounds are welcomed. If you would prefer to earn while you learn, apprenticeships are also available. For example, KPMG offers a Level 4 Junior Management Consultant Apprenticeship. Employers often value experience and skills as much as qualifications, so it's useful to gain relevant work experience before you enter the profession.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £27,000-£40,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £40,000-£60,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £250,000+

## Creative Industries



Careers in the artistic sector are numerous and ever evolving. Careers in the art industry can be competitive, but they are also very rewarding, and often involve higher levels of autonomy and the possibility to collaborate with professionals from other areas on a wide variety of topics. In comparison with other sectors, in 2021 people in the creative industries showed higher levels of education, higher levels of self-employment, and a higher percentage of them (95%) worked in micro-businesses, companies with fewer than 10 employees.<sup>4</sup> The creative

industry includes crafts, design, fashion, film, TV, video, radio, photography, publishing, curating, music, performing and visual arts.

### What they're looking for:

While curiosity, problem-solving and an interest in the arts and culture are generally expected for these types of jobs, creative degrees are not always necessary for successful creative careers – roles in management, public relations, research, technician, finance administration and technology abound. Similarly, Arts degree holders can find employment in other sectors, such as marketing, teaching, healthcare (as movement, music or drama therapist), research, and UX and web design.<sup>5</sup> For jobs in the creative industries, speculative applications can be particularly useful as many graduate positions aren't formally advertised. One valuable networking resource you can use is Creativepool.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £24,000-£32,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £80,000+

## Engineering and Manufacturing



Engineering and manufacturing are a broad sector that includes a wide variety of industries, such as aerospace and aviation, automotive, computing/IT, construction, environmental, food and beverage, infrastructure, motorsport, power, transportation and many more. Whether it's aeroplanes, computers, or nuclear power, engineers and manufacturers coordinate the design, build and testing of products and systems.

### What they're looking for:

For graduates, a degree in engineering or a technology-related subject is usually required, although some engineers have qualifications in other STEM disciplines. You can also access the sector through a degree apprenticeship where you can gain advanced engineering, manufacturing, scientific, digital or procurement skills.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £24,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £40,000-£60,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £80,000-£120,000+

## Financial Services



Financial services in the UK offer a range of different roles and career opportunities. Working in this sector is fast-paced, exciting, and ever-changing. The opportunities encompass a broad range of firms and businesses that manage money, including but not limited to investment banks, retail banks, insurance and accountancy companies, and asset and wealth management firms.

### What they're looking for:

To work within the financial services sector, you need to have an analytical eye and a good head for numbers. You don't need a specific degree for most programmes, however, maths-based graduates are usually best suited for these roles.

There are also opportunities to access the sector through an apprenticeship or degree apprenticeship with a financial firm.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £27,500-£45,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £40,000-£65,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £100,000+

## Green Jobs



### What is a green job?

The world of work is changing, not just because of the pace of new technology and the advance of tools such as AI, but because we need jobs to be greener if we are going to tackle the environmental problems we see today. Green jobs are jobs that actively contribute to protecting or restoring the environment and our planet. They are a recognised growth area in the jobs market. We need more people doing green jobs as we adapt and change the way we produce energy, build

houses, move around or manage our land, seas, and rivers.

### Examples of green jobs

A green job could be specifically designed around making environmental improvements.

Examples include:

- **Ecologist** – someone who studies animals and plants and finds the best way to protect and restore nature.
- **Sustainability Adviser** – someone who advises organisations on how to reduce and manage their environmental impact.
- **Heat Pump Engineer** – someone who installs renewable energy heating systems.
- **Environmental Planner** – someone who designs environmentally sustainable new towns and cities.
- **Countryside Ranger** – someone who manages land to protect nature and to assist visitors.
- **Forester** – someone who manages trees and woodlands.
- **Renewable Energy Engineer** - someone who works on the production of energy from renewable or sustainable sources, including wind, solar and hydro or marine power.

But there are also lots of other jobs that could be done in ways that help tackle climate change and the loss of nature. These include:

- **Environmental lawyer**
- **Green Transport Planner**
- **Environmental architect**
- **Farmer**
- **Gardener**

### **Green Jobs for Nature**

It can be easy to overlook the importance of jobs that directly help to protect and restore nature, yet the loss of nature is one of the biggest environmental threats we face. The good news is that there are lots of different jobs in this sector. Some are very much outdoor-based, which really suits people who love being out and about and getting hands-on with nature. But lots are desk-based jobs that may involve analysing data, using special software to create maps, or to design schemes to help nature recover.

### **What are they looking for?**

Green job employers look for people who are passionate about protecting the environment and eager to make a positive impact. They value skills in areas like construction, marketing, sales, and project management, not just scientific fields. Showing enthusiasm for sustainable practices and a willingness to learn can help you stand out in this growing sector.

### **Salary expectations:**

Typical graduate salary: £25,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £50,000-£100,000+

## Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism



In this industry, you can work in a range of environments, in both head office and front-of-house roles. If you have great people and customer service skills, play to your strengths in a hands-on, customer-facing role. If you would prefer to work behind the scenes, graduates are needed in a variety of head office functions, including administration, finance, IT, marketing, HR and sales. If you're up to the challenge of combining the two, then general management jobs are widely available.

When researching careers, you'll likely see some crossover with other sectors. For example, with healthcare (sports physiotherapy), hospitality and events management (hotel careers), media and internet (sport or travel journalism), teacher training and education (PE teaching) and transport and logistics (jobs in passenger services).

### What they're looking for:

You don't need a degree; instead employers stress the importance of relevant work experience. It's a similar story if you want to work as a holiday rep. Degree qualifications aren't always essential; it's more important for you to possess the essential soft skills such as communication, time management, customer service, and cultural awareness.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£45,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £50,000-£100,000+

## Human Resources (HR)



Human Resources ensure that roles are recruited for appropriately, matching people's skills and experiences with the roles available. They also work to solve disputes and develop their teams through learning and development.

### What they're looking for:

You don't need a degree to work within HR, however, there are some vital skills you need to be successful in this role. You will need excellent communication and interpersonal skills to get the most from your team, as well as showcasing examples of leadership and teamwork skills.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£25,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£46,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £75,000-£100,000+



## Insurance



Insurance is a wide sector within Financial Services that consists of offering risk management in the form of insurance contracts. These contracts provide guaranteed protection and payment for an uncertain future event, in return for a fee on the part of the insured. Within an insurance firm there are many different roles available including actuarial, accountancy, brokerage, claims management, finance, HR, underwriting, legal, marketing, procurement, sales, distribution, risk and IT. The actuarial division assesses and manages the risks of any financial investments, insurance policies, and other activities the firm might pursue.

The accountancy division measures, processes, and manages the financial activities of the firm. The underwriting division involves evaluating the risk of insuring an item/individual to determine its profitability for the insurance company and then setting a price and insurance premium to be charged in exchange for the risk. The risk division ensures the firm has the appropriate frameworks to maximise profitability and safety for the firm, as well as ensuring the firm is upholding its legal responsibilities.

### What they're looking for:

While STEM/finance skills are preferable, you can come from any background and study any subject and still go into insurance. Having an interest in the specific area of insurance you're going into can be advantageous (e.g., an interest in music if you're insuring gigs and concerts).

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £25,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years' experience): £27,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years' experience): £75,000-£100,000+

## Investment Banking



The investment banking sector consists of the industries around financial markets and services, and is focused on the management, movement and creation of capital. The UK is one of the world's leading financial centres, with many major institutions concentrated in London, although there are many different career opportunities all across the UK.

Investment banks typically make profits in three ways: assisting their clients in the buying and selling of securities or companies; raising capital for their clients; or making proprietary investments on their own behalf. Under these three broad categories, investment banks offer a multitude of products and services to their clients, which range from individual retail investors to large corporations.

### What they're looking for:

Whilst there are no specific degree requirements to work in investment banking, a degree in any of the sciences, finance, economics, maths or similar can provide you with the numerical and analytical skills that firms look for in hires.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £25,000-£66,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £60,000-£150,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £150,000-£250,000+

## Investment Management



Investment managers are responsible for investing money on behalf of their clients (who can be individuals, companies, charities or government organisations). Their role includes researching and deciding on the best investment opportunities for their clients' needs, with the ultimate goal of growing their wealth. What they decide depends on multiple factors, such as how much risk a client can take with their initial money, and the time a client has before they have to reach their investment goal. As client needs are at the heart of investment, there are also roles within investment management firms dedicated to building close relationships with clients.

### What they're looking for:

Graduates who have achieved a 2:1 degree in any degree discipline, and who have a demonstrable interest in the field. Some companies, but not all, prefer candidates who do numerical degrees like mathematics or economics, though many others see numerical skills as ones that can be learned and developed on the job.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £28,000-£44,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £48,000-£100,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £100,000-£250,000+

## Journalism and Media



Newspaper journalists research and write stories for national, regional, and local press. They report on news, politics, sports, arts, science, business, and more. They also cover national and local events, entertainment, and human interest stories. Broadcast journalists research, investigate and present news and current affairs content on television, radio and online. They present information through news bulletins, documentaries, podcasts and other factual programmes.

### What they're looking for:

Graduates from any discipline, especially those with good English skills and/or with a degree in journalism, business, or similar. If you want to take an alternative route to university, there are apprenticeships and trainee roles to work in broadcast, TV, or radio journalism.

You will need strong communication and research skills and an ability to work well under pressure. You will also need relevant work experience and many jobs will require a portfolio of your work.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£45,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £40,000-£100,000+

## Law: Barrister



Barristers are legal specialists who represent individuals and organisations in courts and tribunals. Most barristers are self-employed, and some work in specific organisations such as charities and the Crown Prosecution Service. Barristers specialise in different areas of law including family law, commercial law, criminal law, environmental law, and sports law. Earnings are highly variable, and can be low when you first start out.

### What they're looking for:

There are three components to becoming a barrister. Firstly, you'll need to complete the academic component by getting a minimum 2:2 undergraduate degree in law, or in a non-law subject, followed by the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). However academic achievement is taken into consideration for this career and as such you should aim for the highest grades possible.

Next you'll need to become a member of one of the Inns of Court and then undertake a Bar training course. Lastly, you'll have to complete the work-based component by doing a pupillage. These are very competitive so you will need relevant work experience to make your application stand out, such as a mini-pupillage, work shadowing, paralegal work and voluntary work.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £19,000-£50,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £50,000-£150,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £200,000+

## Law: Solicitor



Solicitors advise their clients (individuals, groups or businesses/organisations) on the legal action they should take. Qualified solicitors can work privately, in-house for companies, in government or in the courts. The work carried out by a solicitor varies depending on where you work, your specialist area and the case you are working on.

### What they're looking for:

To become a solicitor, you will need an undergraduate degree. If you haven't studied law at university, you will need to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL) - commonly referred to as a law conversion course - or a similar postgraduate qualification to help prepare you for the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

Once you have completed a law degree or non-law degree followed by a conversion course (or similar), you will then need to study for and pass both stages of the SQE. Subsequently, you will need to complete two years of full-time qualifying work experience. This is often completed at the firm in which you will eventually qualify as a solicitor. Some firms may cover the costs of your PGDL (if applicable), SQE 1 and 2 preparation courses and exams. You must also satisfy the Solicitors Regulation Authority's (SRA) character and suitability requirements.

Salary expectations	Big City Firms	Local/Regional Firms
Typical graduate salary	£40,000 - £60,000	£18,000 - £48,000
Newly Qualified Solicitor	£30,000 - £65,000	£30,000 - £44,000
Potential salary (after five years experience)	£105,000 - £340,000	£38,000 - £76,000
Top earners (10-15 years experience)	£300,000 - £1,000,000+	£100,000+

## Marketing & Advertising



Marketing includes planning, advertising, events organisation, product design and distribution. You need to be creative and organised. All sorts of organisations have marketing departments, and your work will vary according to the size/type of organisation, and what it is you're trying to promote. You could also work in an agency, supporting external clients with all aspects of their marketing strategy.

### What they're looking for:

If you decide to go to university, a degree in a subject like marketing, communications or business can be helpful. For those looking for alternative routes to university, the Chartered Institute of Marketing offers professional qualifications. However, marketing is open to all and you can enter the industry with any degree/qualification background. Employers will be looking for your ability to demonstrate key transferable skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, project management and commercial awareness.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£30,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£60,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £60,000-£150,000+

## Medicine



The field of Medicine is an ever-evolving sector and, as a Doctor, you will have a huge variety of career pathways available to explore. There are a wide range of specialties from General Practice (GP) to emergency medicine, anaesthetics to paediatrics. A career in Medicine is one which will always keep you on your toes!

### Pathway to becoming a Doctor

In order to become a Doctor, you will need to study a Medicine (MBChB or MBBS) degree at one of the 45 medical schools across the UK or via the new Medical Degree Apprenticeship. The standard Medicine course is 5 years in duration, with most offering the opportunity to obtain an Intercalated degree by studying for an additional year, adding up to a total of 6 years. For some universities, intercalation is compulsory and built into the course. The medical application process is a long and complicated one with many additional hurdles to overcome. However, there are many resources available to help aspiring medics navigate this process and be accepted into medical school.

The Medical Degree apprenticeship is set to recruit their first cohort of students in September 2024. The Apprentices will earn a wage while training to nationally recognised standards, and won't have to pay any tuition fees. People who complete the Medical Degree Apprenticeship will have the same academic qualifications as those who complete their degree through medical school. The apprenticeship will typically last five years and apprentices will have to complete all academic elements of medical training.

Once you have completed your Medical degree, to work for the NHS, you will be required to enter a 2-year foundation training programme where you will work in various specialities as a Foundation year 1 and 2 (FY1/2) doctor. After completing your foundation training, you can then choose which area(s) in Medicine you want to specialise in. You will then sit specific exams, apply for training and if successful begin training to work within your chosen specialty.



## Applying to Medicine

The academic requirements for UK medical schools do vary slightly, with most requiring AAA at A-level or AAAAB at Scottish Highers, all to be obtained in one sitting. Some typically compulsory subjects are Chemistry and Biology, but requirements do vary between medical schools. Additionally, most universities do have widening access grades which are lower for eligible students who meet certain criteria (e.g., care-experienced).

Alongside grades, most medical schools require their applicants to sit an admission test, the most common of which is the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) to be sat in the summer before submitting your application to Medicine.

Applicants are required to show that they have engaged in a range of extra-curricular activities on top of their academic pursuits, along with demonstrating that they have attempted to find out more about the medical sector, whether through work experience such as shadowing a GP, volunteering in a care home or simply through attending relevant events or speaking to healthcare professionals. A personal statement is required for any university application, and Medicine is no exception. Medical admissions consider a personal statement to be an opportunity to display your passion for medicine, reflect on the skills you've learned from work experience and extracurricular activities, and link those skills to the realities of being a doctor.



In2MedSchool is a widening participation initiative which consists of over 2,500 medical student and doctor volunteers from across the UK wanting to give back to their communities. Alongside mentoring, they run various webinars and provide a variety of resources to support their Mentees.

Find out more:

[In2MedSchool.com](https://www.in2medschool.com)

[@In2MedSchool](https://twitter.com/In2MedSchool)

The last step towards being accepted into medical school is attending an interview in the form of a panel interview or a series of multiple mini-interviews (MMIs). Both of these are designed to assess your communication skills and your suitability for the profession.

It is expected that entry to the medical degree apprenticeship will have the same rigorous application process. The entry requirements will be set by medical schools and employers. Medical schools will have minimum entry requirements for their courses. The employer must be assured that the candidate is capable of the academic learning required and that they possess the values and behaviours to become a medical doctor.

### **Salary expectations:**

Typical starting salary in Foundation training: FY1 = £32,398, FY2 = £37,303

Typical starting salary as a Specialty Registrar: £43,923

Typical starting salary as a Consultant: £99,532

## Property & Real Estate



Working as an estate agent, you'll usually specialise in either sales or letting of residential or commercial properties, businesses or land on behalf of your clients. You'll value and market properties, with the aim of negotiating the best price for your client. Your role will involve frequent liaison with banks, building societies, mortgage brokers, surveyors, solicitors and other estate agencies during transactions. You may also handle sales taking place via auction.

### What they're looking for:

For a career as an estate agent, having a foundation degree, higher national diploma or degree in relevant subjects is not essential but may be advantageous. These include subjects such as business studies, civil and structural engineering, surveying, estate management or urban and land studies. You will need good people skills, an eye for detail and the ability to negotiate a deal through to completion.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £20,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £30,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £100,000+

## Research (Academic)



Academic researchers write papers, books, chapters of books and reports on their specialised areas of knowledge, which they will gain through extensive study and research. A PhD ("Doctor of Philosophy"), which involves writing a thesis report after 3-4 years of in-depth research, is essential to develop the depth of understanding necessary. Academics are often required to teach and supervise students from universities, and speak about their research at conferences for their subjects. The majority of their time will be spent researching, meeting with colleagues to discuss the department's strategy and working with undergraduate students.

### What they're looking for:

It can be difficult to get into academia. You will need a strong academic record, an undergraduate degree, a Master Degree and either have or be working towards a PhD. Previous teaching experience will also help, as well as a passion for your subject and the desire to research the field and produce new and original research in your chosen topic. The typical career path involves holding a postdoctoral position before being able to apply for lecturer positions. This can be achieved either by applying for your own grant to fund a project, or by applying to work as a post-doctoral research assistant on someone else's project.

### Salary expectations:

Whilst studying for PhD: £16,000-£35,000 stipend in the form of a scholarship, bursary or grant

Post-doctoral researcher: £27,000-£44,000

Senior lecturer: £43,000-100,000+

## Research & Development



Individuals who have careers in Research and Development (R&D) work for a business or government to innovatively improve and develop new or existing products and services. They conduct research to understand the consumer and public needs, and then think creatively and innovatively to develop the technology and science to bring products to life - whether it's creating vegan ice cream or fast-charging electric cars.

### What they're looking for:

To work in the research and development industry, you will need a degree in a subject related to the field of research in which you want to work in. For some jobs, a postgraduate qualification, such as a masters, may also be required. You will also need to be able to think creatively, innovatively and analytically. Whilst you will be required to sometimes work independently, you need to have excellent teamwork skills and have a growth mindset.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £28,000-£35,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £35,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £60,000 - £100,000+

## Retail Banking



Customers use high street branches of the larger commercial banks, with services ranging from savings and checking accounts, to mortgages, and debit/credit cards. Within retail banking there are a variety of roles including within the management team, in an operational role, and in client-facing services. As a manager you will be in charge of recruiting teams of people, representing the bank, meeting sales targets, and managing budgets. As a junior banker you will deal with customer

queries, understand customer needs, process paperwork from sales, and learn about new products, services and processes the branch implements.

### What they're looking for:

Many graduate retail banking programmes are open to graduates from any degree background, however, a degree in any of the sciences, finance, economics, maths or similar may be advantageous. There are also banking apprenticeships offered by many of the UK's leading retail banks. Employers will be looking for your affinity for numeracy and customer service, and your ability to demonstrate strong communication and analytical skills.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£32,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £25,000-£40,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £80,000+

## Retail and Consumer Goods



Retail sector economic output was £112.8 billion in 2023, 4.9% of the UK's total economic output.<sup>6</sup> It includes all shops and stores that sell goods to shoppers. The sector has a huge variety of apprenticeship and graduate opportunities in customer-facing and head office roles. These include roles in buying, finance, human resources, marketing, supply chain and technology.

### What they're looking for:

There are numerous graduate and non-graduate routes you can take to work in retail; students from a diverse range of educational backgrounds are welcomed.

The skills retailers look for depend on the type of retailer (supermarket, department store, online retailer) and also depend on the specific role that you're applying for. Generally, strong communication, customer service and problem-solving skills are desired.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £16,000-£25,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £25,000-£35,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £80,000+

## Social Work



Social workers support individuals who have previously experienced or are currently experiencing issues of poverty, substance abuse, mental health issues or are vulnerable. They work to improve their lives or the environment they are living and working in. Some social workers work directly with individuals, such as in schools, care or nursing homes and hospitals. Whereas other social workers operate in organisations advocating for a better quality of life, for example, in government or local council departments and trusts.

### What they're looking for:

People with a genuine passion who want to improve the quality of life for certain individuals. Working with people in vulnerable environments or who may have difficult issues can be a challenging experience. You will need to have a degree in social work or MSW (Masters of Social Work).

However, other degrees which relate to the social work field, such as law, politics, government, social care or social sciences can help you gain relevant work experience. Some post-university schemes also offer graduates the opportunity to gain practical experience whilst also becoming a qualified social worker, regardless of degree background.

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £18,000-£39,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £25,000-£46,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £40,000-£60,000+



## Technology



The technology sector is booming with new and exciting opportunities. As the world becomes more digital, opportunities within technology companies are growing at a rapid rate - so much so that they are now some of the biggest employers in the world! Technology companies are always on the lookout for those with passion, drive and the right skills to complement their work environment.

The technology sector has opportunities for everyone - both in technical and non-technical roles. If your interests lie in software development, using programming languages or artificial intelligence solutions, it is possible to pick technical roles in some of the most high-profile brands in the world like Apple, Google, and Meta.

While STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) degrees are desirable for such roles, they are not always required, as there are now many opportunities to develop the necessary skills outside of the classroom.

Alternatively, there are many roles available within the technology sector for those interested in other disciplines, such as design, media, sales, marketing, and communications. All of these roles are very important for technology companies and contribute to the products and services that affect the lives of billions of people around the globe.



**Programmers:**  
writing and testing programmes.



**Software Designers  
and Engineers:**  
designing, researching, developing  
and testing computer software.



**Product Managers:**  
translating ideas into technical  
solutions, both through building  
new products and developing  
existing ones.



**Cyber Security:**  
Managing risk to cyber threats.



**Technology Consultants:**  
advising clients on new projects  
and providing industry updates.



**Social Media Managers:**  
community management and  
exploring ways to increase reach  
and engagement via social media.



**Marketing Executives:**  
maintaining brand presence by  
creating, delivering and evaluating  
paid marketing campaigns.



**Communication Executives:**  
creating and delivering PR  
campaigns, supporting product  
launches, and dealing with  
reputation issues.

There are innumerable benefits to working in the technology sector. One such benefit is the wide range of job types and careers available, with technology companies often creating interesting new roles to push innovation in the sector.

Tech companies tend to place great emphasis on their employee experience, meaning that there is a big focus on unleashing individual potential, investment in training, creating a positive working environment, and providing challenging work assignments.

Technology companies are some of the highest-paying employers, providing competitive salaries and benefits, even at graduate and entry level. You will often meet people from different backgrounds, countries of origin and individual styles that work together as one team.

Many people who work in the technology industry find the environment to be uplifting, collaborative and fun! People come from all over the world to work in the UK's tech industry and, over the last 15 years, great improvements have been made to increase female representation within the sector.

**What they're looking for:**

It is a misconception that having a STEM qualification is essential to work and excel in the technology sector. Gaining sought-after skills like problem-solving, collaboration and adapting well to the constantly evolving technology landscape are key to being successful in applications, as well as demonstrating genuine passion and interest in the sector.

**Salary expectations:**

Typical graduate salary: £28,000-£50,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £45,000-£125,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £150,000-£500,000+

## Transport and Logistics



The transport and logistics sector is key for the nation's economy and the government is investing billions of pounds into these growing industries. Logistics and transport involve the efficient flow of goods and services locally, nationally or internationally across road, rail, air or sea. As well as transport networks, it also incorporates vehicle manufacturing, infrastructure maintenance, transport planning and traffic management.

There are a huge variety of options and roles available in this sector ranging from managerial or planning to operational. Within larger companies, there are opportunities in support functions such as human resources, marketing, customer service and finance. The sector will increasingly rely on technical skills to oversee advanced and digitised technologies and processes.

### What they're looking for:

Whether you're keen on improving transport systems, managing transport services or coordinating the storage and distribution of goods, there are roles for every skillset and every level of education. Key skills that are useful in this sector will vary according to the role, but can include commercial awareness, excellent communication, project management and time management skills.

Larger organisations such as the Royal Mail, Network Rail and Ryanair offer transport graduate schemes in disciplines such as general management, engineering, operations, transport planning and logistics, IT, finance and HR.

There are also a number of apprenticeship programmes available with well-known employers such as British Airways, BMW and Amazon ranging from Intermediate Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs) all the way up to degree Levels 6 and 7 (Bachelors or Masters standard).

### Salary expectations:

Typical graduate salary: £24,000-£32,000

Potential salary (after five years experience): £32,000-£50,000

Top earners (10-15 years experience): £50,000- £80,000+